
**JOINT MEETING
VIRGINIA COAL MINE SAFETY BOARD
BOARD OF COAL MINING EXAMINERS**

**Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy
Tuesday – May 1, 2007 - 9:00 A.M.**

MINUTES

JOINT MEETING VIRGINIA COAL MINE SAFETY BOARD BOARD OF COAL MINING EXAMINERS

MEMBERS PRESENT

Coal Mine Safety Board

Richard Waddell
Billy Powers
Foster Tankersley
David Berry
Patti Church
Roy Jessee
Ernest Benko

Board of Coal Mining Examiners

Gerald Kendrick
Joe Buchanan
Arvil McConnell
Frank Linkous

MEMBERS ABSENT

Coal Mine Safety Board

William Kiser
Max Kennedy

Board of Coal Mining Examiners

None

Note: One vacant position

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bo Willis, Department of Mines, Minerals & Energy (DMME) Director
Sharon Pigeon, Assistant Attorney General
Mary Gibson, Regulatory Boards Administrator
Opie McKinney, DM Mine Inspector Supervisor
John Thomas, DM Mine Inspector Supervisor
Mary Baker, DMME Systems Analyst
Heather Smith, Director of Corporate Health, Occumed
Kim Claytor, NTA, Inc.
Helen Blevins, Consol Coal Corp.
John Schoolcraft, Paramount Coal Corporation
Patty Varner, DM Administrative Program Specialist
Donna Mullins, DM Administrative Program Specialist
Mike Canada
Sam Church

Meeting Called To Order

Chairman Foster Tankersley called the meeting to order. A roll call of members determined there was a quorum present. Seven of the nine members of the Coal Mine Safety Board and all four of the current membership of the Board of Coal Mining Examiners were present.

Chairman Tankersley called for a motion to dispense in reading of minutes from previous meetings. Motion was made, seconded with unanimous vote taken to approve the agenda for the May 1, 2007, meeting.

Mine Safety Awards 2007

Nominations for and distribution of the Mine Safety Awards for 2007 were reviewed and approved by the Coal Mine Safety Board. A handout outlining criteria for the various awards included a list of mine and individual categories of nominations meeting the criteria and the selected winner for each category. The company safety records of all nominations were audited both through DMME and federal Mine Safety and Health Administration records to qualify them for the categories. One error under category type was corrected. Motion was made, seconded and voted upon to proceed with presenting the awards to winners, preparing press releases and placing a list of winners on the DMME website.

New Business – Status of Virginia Mine Safety Performance

Frank Linkous gave a brief update on Virginia's coal mining industry safety performance and overview of key safety initiatives addressed by DMME and industry during the last six months. Mr. Linkous reviewed charts illustrating comparisons over several years of production and office employment and coal production; coal mining fatalities – nation vs. Virginia; Virginia fatality frequency rate with comparison to Kentucky and West Virginia; and serious personal injury rate illustrating a continuous decline in our numbers of injuries resulting in 24 hours hospital confinement. DM's goal is to work towards improving the safety and lives of Virginia's coal miners, both surface and underground, every day. A short-term decline in coal production is an expected impact of implementation of the Federal MINER Act.

Key coal mine safety initiatives of Virginia's coal mining industry are:

- Mine Emergency Response
- Mine Foreman Continuing Education
- Mine Electrical Safety
- Surface Mine Highwall Safety
- Ground Control Plan Updates
- Support for Implementation of Federal MINER Act
- Substance Abuse in Mining – Senate Bill No. 1091

Preparation for Implementation of Virginia Senate Bill No. 1091

The Boards reviewed the key points of Senate Bill No. 1091. The focus of the bill is substance abuse in mining and provides for new miner screening, probable cause and post accident screening, identifying substance abusers and removal from the mining environment until the substance abuse is addressed.

The Board received comments and their perspectives on the impacts of the substance abuse legislation to coal operators from two coal company representatives, John Schoolcraft, Sr. Manager of Human Resources, with Alpha Natural Resources and Helen Blevins with Consolidation Coal Company.

The Boards received information exchanges and handouts presented by Kim Claytor, Sales/Compliance Consultant, with Nationwide Testing Association, Inc. and Heather M. Smith, Director of Corporate Health, with Norton Community Hospital, Occumed, and participated in questions and answers. Substance abuse sampling, laboratory screening and testing and third party medical review and other services were discussed.

Mary Baker, DMME Systems Analyst, demonstrated the computerized means of tracking substance abuse information, which DMME recently has developed in anticipation of implementing

the substance abuse legislation. Forms to be used in this task were presented and requests for input in needed modifications for tailoring to aid operators were solicited.

❖ **Next Meeting:** To be announced at a later date.

Adjournment

Upon a motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Varner
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Secretary